

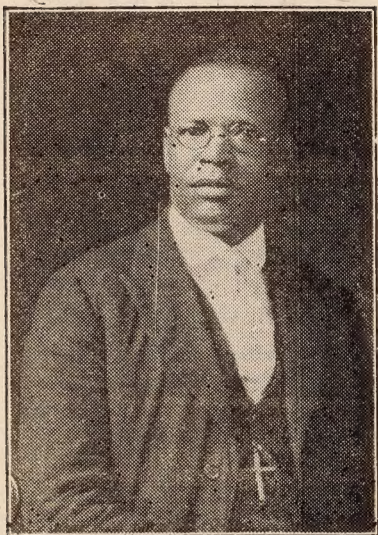
THE
A. M. E.
LAYMAN

BY
Rev. E. J. Jackson



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Church Historical Sketch

The A. M. E. Church was born out of necessity to a struggling race. She is the balance of power when it comes to our group. Ours is a struggling race and the church must do more than fit men for heaven, but must fit them to live here.

The church must come back to the old land-mark, in that it must take possession of the lives of the people. We acknowledge the loyalty of the laymen to the church in the last hundred years or more, but there is much more to be done in this day and in the days to come. The group to which we belong is demanding a more intellectual leadership, a more moral leadership and larger hearted men; men who dream, men who have visions and power to put them into operations for the advancement of the church and race. The layman is an important factor in the church. The very spirit of the church is manhood and self-help. The laymen of this church especially should stand upon their own feet. Every layman of the church should be one hundred percent African Methodist. So many people are ashamed to be called an African Methodist, but Richard Allen, our illustrious founder, was not ashamed to be called one nor to name his church African Methodist Episcopal. The immediate associates of Allen and on until now, the bishops and fathers of the church, are not ashamed of this grand name. The history of the world, if written, would not be complete without mention of the work of the great A. M. E. Church. The laymen of our church like her name: not for the name so much, but for what she is doing in the world. The A. M. E. Church has lifted some

of her laymen high in state and church. The A. M. E. Church has not whined, but she has built her schools, and is still building for time and eternity.

The A. M. E. Church is built upon a solid foundation and the laymen are going to stay with her until the end of time. No man ought to be ashamed of himself, especially when God made him or her just as He wanted them to be. Many of our group are trying to get away from ourselves by joining other denominations and becoming white, but the laymen in the A. M. E. Church are proud of their name. There should be no unrest as to the A. M. E. Church for she is doing and will do her work with a loyal set of laymen, marching in one solid phalanx to her highest destiny.

1. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School is the first step by way of training from the main branch of the church. The Sunday school should have the support of every loyal layman of the church, for unless we indoctrinate our children and teach them not only the Bible, but we must teach our race church pride. Many denominations are after our children, not because they want to give them a chance like other men, but they come and say we are doing missionary work among Negroes. The other denominations never think a Negro can be lifted to the height of a white man, it matters not about his preparation, character nor religion. Hence, we must begin in our Sunday Schools to teach our children church race pride.

If a race or church cannot govern itself how can it expect to be properly governed by another race. The Sunday School gets a hold of the child first and hence it is her duty to so teach, beginning with the cradle roll, to teach the doctrine of church and race pride. As a church distinctively governed by ourselves, we must draw more tightly the lines of demarcation and **begin with the cradle roll in teach-**

ing our children race church pride and let it go through the whole Sunday School. There is too much laxity along this particular line of our work, and great inroads have been made on our race church. The Judaisers taught their children Judaism; the Catholics taught their children Catholicism; the Baptists teach their children Baptistism, and why not we teach ours African Methodism?

2. THE ALLEN CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR LEAGUE.

This is another of the large training stations for our young people. The League is the youngest department of the A. M. E. Church, but it has proven its worthiness already in the church. No other department of the church has done so much for the young people as the Allen Christian Endeavor League. The League has many phases to it. The Allen Life Guard Department is doing more to save the boys of the church than any other department.

The A. M. E. Church has not awakened to the real fact of this department as yet. During the last world war the American nation found from the study and test of her young men that she would have to start at the cradle and make a new nation. Hence, the nation is planting kindergartens and day nurseries on all sides, organizations and institutions of all kinds to save the boys of the nation.

This plan is working well in the nation and should work well in the church. Every agency should be put to work to save the boys of the church. In the Allen Christian Endeavor League we are to train for service and there should be no laxity on our part in prosecuting this work. The young people of the church are expecting it of us. The church should mold and fashion the society of the young people. Man is a social being and since he is, there is a social side to the church and community in which he lives. The social life of the community

should vibrate from the Allen Christian Endeavor League.

3. THE LAYMAN AND MISSIONS.

This is a very important part of the Christian work which should be well understood by every loyal layman. Our Lord not only called the ministry to spread the kingdom, but the laymen likewise. The laymen who are up in the doctrines and workings of his church will assist in fostering the great cause of missions. The Master calls us over the sea and at home, also to spread the glad tidings of the Son of God. In the next hundred years the heathen lands of Africa will become monuments to the laymen of the African M. E. Church, and they shall shine forth as the sun with brightness for those whom they turned to righteousness. The Missionary Work of the church has been left largely to the women of the church, but this is the duty of the men likewise.

THE LAYMAN AND HIS FAMILY

From the very beginning of man upon the earth there has been husband and wife. The husband and wife are flesh of one flesh and bone of one bone. The very beginning of heaven itself is the home. There is no place on earth better than sweet home. "For a man's home is his castle" says Sir Edward Coke. Then Goldsmith says:

"At night returning every labor sped
He sits him down the monarch of a shed,
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
His children's looks that brighten at the blaze;
While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board."

The layman should look well to his family life so that it might be an example in the community

in which he lives. The family life of the layman should reflect credit for the church in his community, so that men in the lowly walks of life will see reality in the religion of Jesus.

In the family the Bible should be read, and prayer and singing for the family worship. If for any reason the above exercises cannot be carried out the Lord's prayer should be said in concert. God has commanded us to teach the word of God diligently to our children and talk it when we sit in our houses. Prayer is the most essential part of the family worship, for it is through prayer we directly approach God to thank Him or adore Him. If parents will commence the prayer habit early in the home the children will learn the way of the Lord while they are young and grow up into a full Christian life.

1. DUTY OF HUSBAND TO WIFE.

The husband should love his wife, he should honor her as he honored her when he was courting her. So many men think when they marry, the work is done, but the work has just begun. When a man chooses one from among all the women to be his wife he should love her with an affectionate love. A man may give his wife costly gifts, he may give her fine dresses and far away trips, but her heart hungers for something beyond all these, and that is love. A man should love his wife as he loves himself and this means he should provide for her. He should insure his life so that in case he passes to the great Beyond first his family would have means for life's sustenance. The husband should provide a home for his family, for it is a hard burden to pay rent. The husband should lay aside a little each year of his daily earnings so that he might better provide for his loved ones in case of death. A real husband will be with his wife all the time he can; but some husbands delight in spending all the time away from their wives they can. Love is a

wife's only wages and she should not be scrimped in her pay.

2. DUTY OF WIFE TO HUSBAND.

Love is the one word that sums up all the duties that we owe to beings. "Wives love your own husbands." Titus 2:4. We speak of the duty of husband to wife and of wife to husband, but there can be nothing but equality of duties on both sides. The Divine command is: "The wife see that she reverences her husband." Eph. 5:33. No true woman wants a husband whom she cannot reverence and to whom she cannot look up. "Ye wives, be in subjection to your husband." Peter 3:1.

From the teachings of the New Testament, women in many nations have been lifted from a state of slavery to equality with men.

3. DUTY OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS AND THE DUTY OF CHILDREN ONE TO THE OTHER.

"Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Exodus 20:12. This is the first command with promise. God begins with the children in laying down the duties which we owe to our fellowmen. If children would honor their parents there would be little need for other commands. There are two reasons why children should love and honor their parents; first, because of the position they hold as our protectors, rulers and providers. Children should obey their parents; they should obey from love and not from fear. In this modern time many of our parents are rearing a class of "do-as-you-please" children and hence the jails and reformatories are filled with mothers' lovely boys. The training spoken of here should begin in the child before it is born. Children should have no secrets to keep from their parents and they should

unbosom themselves to their parents. The boy life should be made a closer study of, for we are getting some bad results. The brother knows not his relation to his sister, and neither does the sister know her relation to brother. The Bible teaches this one great lesson: "Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love." Rom. 12:10. Some claim that boys should be brought up to themselves, but the boys should be brought up with the girls of the family and learn to protect them. Brothers should be courteous to their sisters and protect them. Sisters and brothers should be helpful to each other.

3. LAYMEN SHOULD COOPERATE WITH THE MINISTER TO ADVANCE THE CHURCH.

The minister is the planner of the social life of the community and laymen should cooperate with the pastor in lifting the social life of the community and church. The church is the biggest thing in the community and should domineer the social life of the community.

4. THE LAWMAN AND THE COMMUNITY.

1. The Political Life.
2. The Social Life.

The community in which we live should not be filled with foul air. We complain many times about our conditions, but conditions are what we make them generally. If the educational atmosphere of our community is not good it is because we have not demanded it from the state by our vote. If the moral condition of our community is low it is because we have not thrown around it the proper influence. A few good citizens who are Christians can change the atmosphere of any community. Good social workers can help any community. The church and the school are two potent factors in any com-

munity for good. It can readily be seen that where we have poor churches and schools the standard of the community is low. The community should support the church that it might become strong to administer to the community.

1. THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY.

Since man has a social side there should be larger preparations made by the church for this important side of the community. The social life of the community should be governed by the church. The social life of the community does not belong to the dance hall, the theatre nor any other organizations, but to the church and her various departments. When the social life of the community is in the hands of a bad class of individuals the church has not functioned well. There is a social side to the church as well as the spiritual side, and these two must go hand in hand. A good church social brings the people of the community together and forms a more intimate relation one for the other. They help bring the young together and there will be no need for card parties, but the church will fill the great social want in the lives of the young.

2. POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY.

The ballot is the greatest power given to individuals for the government of themselves and should be used very wisely by those who have it. The ballot should be used to elect the best men to office. Says one: "When the wicked rule the righteous mourn." Many times innocent people have been made to suffer because of cheap ward politicians in office, but the ballot should be used to put them out and cleanse the community of that class of men. Don't be bought but stand for right if you must stand alone. Conditions should be largely changed in many of our communities for the rea-

son suffrage has been granted to the women. "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

5. THE ADVANTAGE OF OWNING A HOME.

Each family should own its home. It is almost crucial to pay rent. Money land - lords take advantage of the poorer classes and make them pay extortionary rents in order that they might keep them poor. Better to have an humble cottage than pay rent for a mansion. Your children will demand a good home of you and it should be the parents' indispensable duty to provide a home for their loved ones. Some day the parents will fall asleep and they can rest in peace because they left a good home for their children and some standard insurance.

And now, my dear laymen of the great A. M. E. Church, I hope I have dropped a few things that you might think upon and be benighted thereby. If I have, I am happy. I am,

Yours for the Master's cause,

E. J. JACKSON.